

FIRST
COMICS
DELUXE SERIES

AUG. \$1.75
NO. 26
\$2.45 CANADA

BADGER™



WHO ARE THESE GUYS, ANYWAY?



The Badger is **Norbert Sykes**, a Vietnam veteran suffering from an extremely rare multiple personality disorder, which has its origins in childhood trauma. Seven great personalities in one. The personality most frequently inhabited by Norbert, indeed almost *exclusively preferred*, is the Badger, a self-styled crime fighter who rides the highways and by-ways of America, meting out bloody justice to jaywalkers, ticket scalpers, indifferent teenaged fast food clerks, in fact, *any damn body he feels like because he's CRAZY!*

Badger is an expert at hand-to-hand combat. He began his training in Shorin-ryu but has since gone on to master dozens of obscure, esoteric, arcane, not to mention obstruse martial arts, the likes of which you seldom hear about.

He can also talk to the animals — just like Dr. Doolittle, or Lorne Greene. Only Badger gets better results than Lorne Greene.

Badger lives with **Ham the Weather Wizard** in a castle south of Barneveld, Wisconsin. Ham and Badger met while both were inmates at a state mental hospital. Through cunning and chicanery, Ham has amassed a considerable fortune.

LAST ISSUE: Badger answered a retired school teacher's plea for help, saved her home, and avenged the senseless slaughter of her beloved ducks. Doesn't sound like much to you, huh? Well, what else do expect way out in the boondocks of Wisconsin? Just wait until you see what happens when Badger tackles the wildlife in Chicago!

nomscans HaCsA

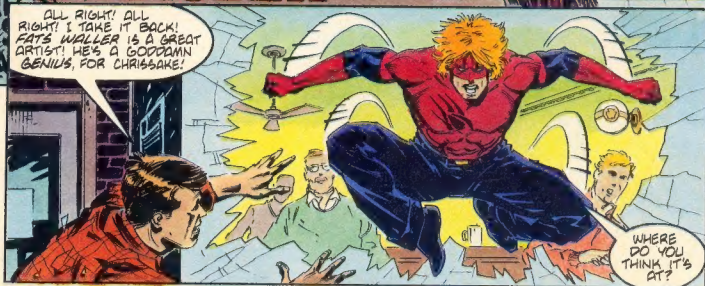
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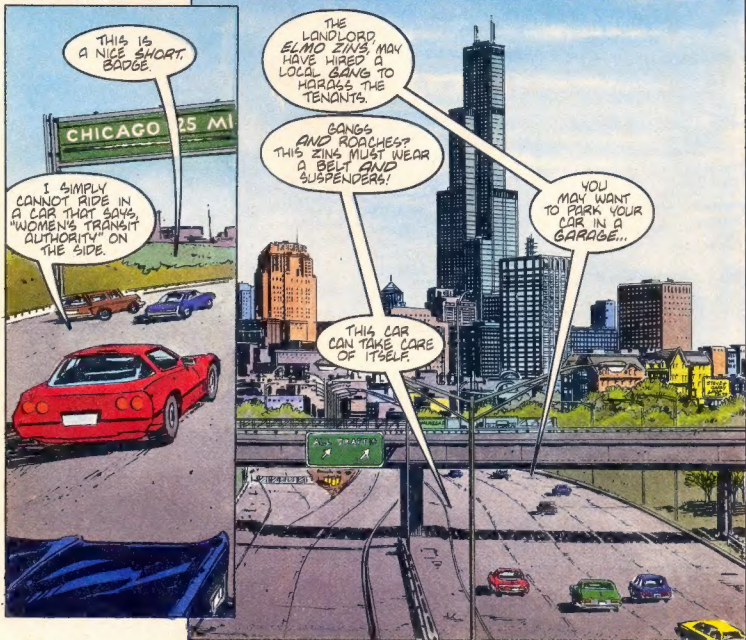
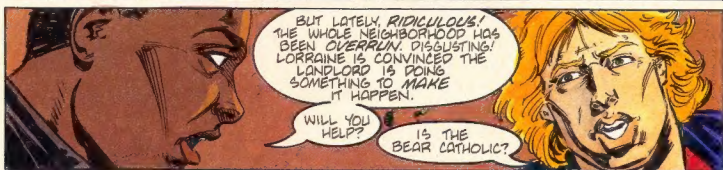
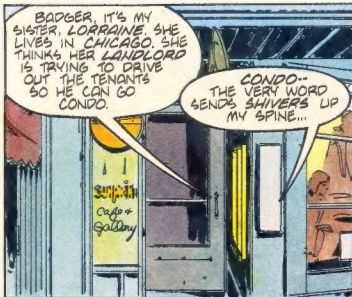
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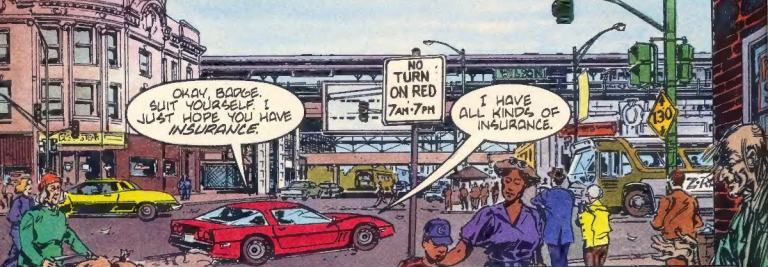
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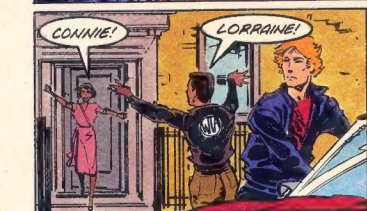


OKAY, BADGE.
SUIT YOURSELF. I
JUST HOPE YOU HAVE
INSURANCE.

I HAVE
ALL KINDS OF
INSURANCE.

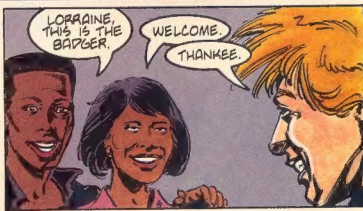


THERE'S
LORRAINE'S
BUILDING ON
THE RIGHT.



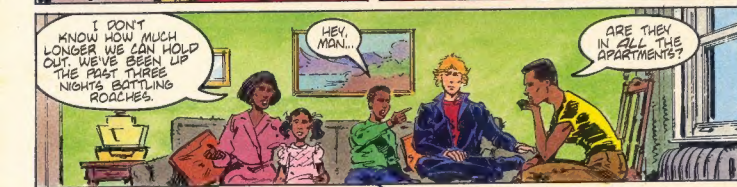
CONNIE!

LORRAINE!



LORRAINE,
THIS IS THE
BADGE.

WELCOME.
THANKEE.



I DON'T
KNOW HOW MUCH
LONGER WE CAN HOLD
OUT. WE'VE BEEN UP
THE PAST THREE
NIGHTS BATTLING
ROACHES.

HEY,
MAN...

ARE THEY
IN ALL
THE
APARTMENTS?

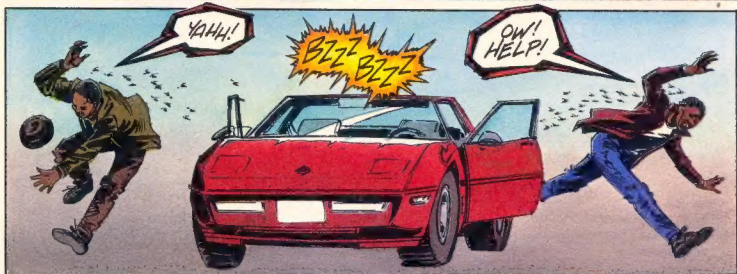
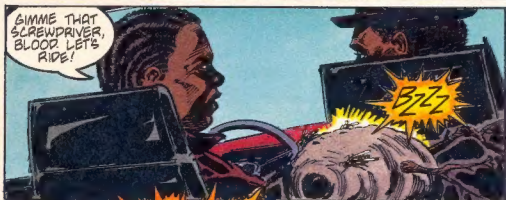


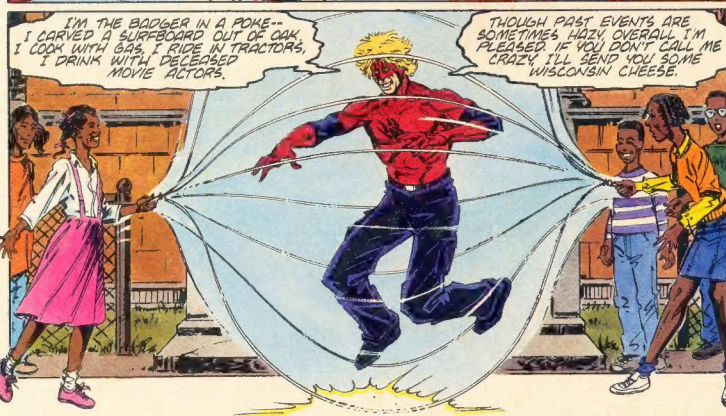
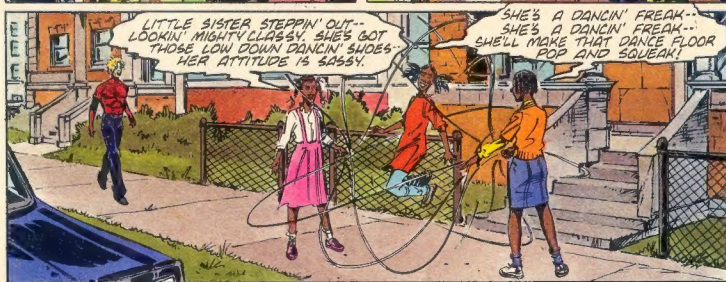
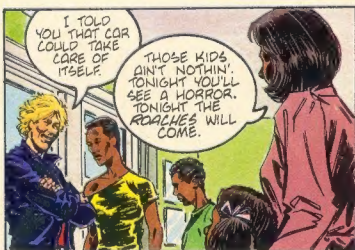
THEY'RE ALL
OVER THE BUILDING,
BUT NOT NEXT DOOR. ZING
DOESN'T OWN THAT BUILDING.
IT'S ALMOST AS IF SOMEONE
WERE CONTROLLING THEM!
BUT IT'S TOO HORRIBLE
TO THINK ABOUT.

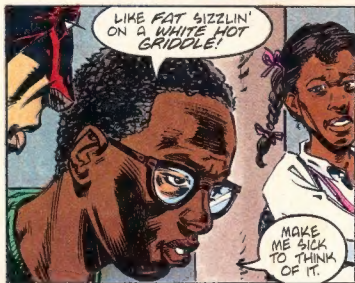
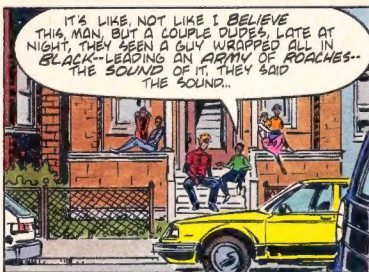
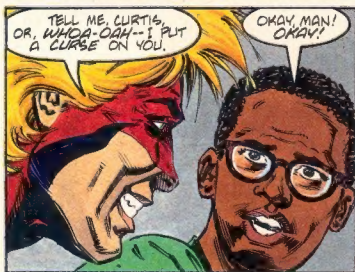
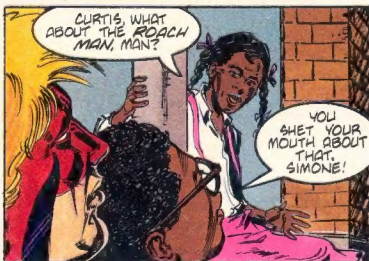
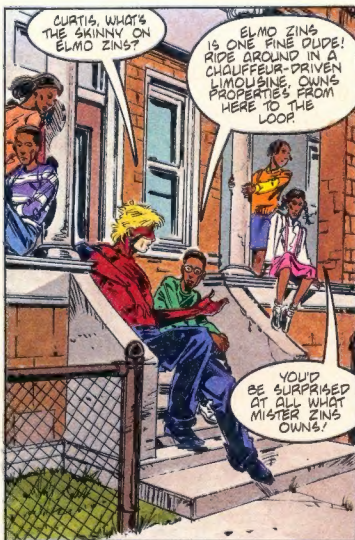
NOTHING IS
TOO HORRIBLE TO
THINK ABOUT.

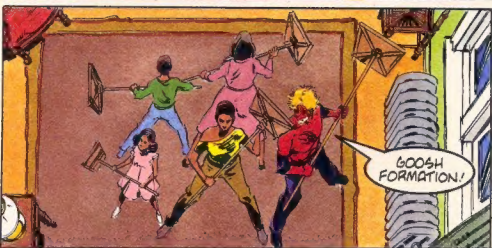
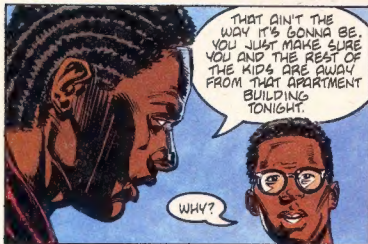
HEY, MAN...
YOU THINK YOU
BAD YOU SHOULD
SEE MY MAN,
BRUCE
LEE.

OH HELL! I
TOLD YOU NOT TO
PARK ON THE
STREET!

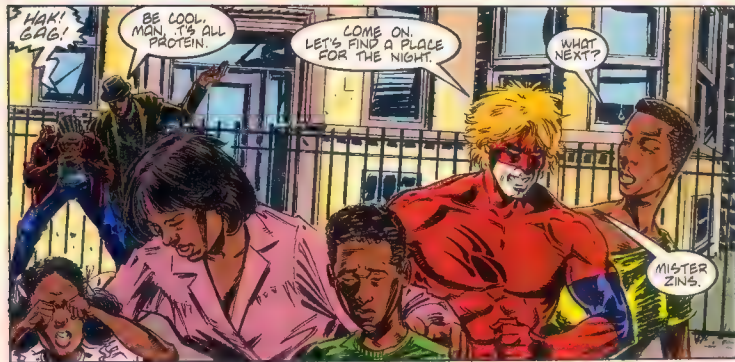
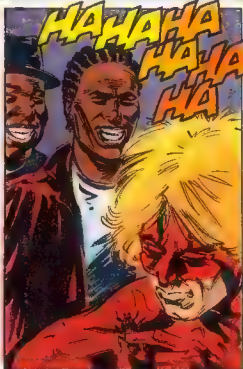












FIRST NOTES

A FIRST RATE JOB

A couple months back I wrote a column about ratings systems for comics, stating, "First Comics is a dependable, responsible publisher, interested in expanding the comics market, not restricting it," and "If a rating system is imposed on comics, it won't be because of anything published by First Comics."

Since then I've re-considered my stance because it suddenly dawned on me that there's nothing like a nice, hot controversy to increase circulation — and the current debate on ratings for comics is generating enough BTUs to heat my house for the next two years!

Let's face it: we're not going to get a heck of a lot of ink in the press if we continue to do the same old thing. This reliability tag is getting to be quite a millstone. I mean, what kind of coverage do you think we'll get with a press release that proclaims: **FIRST COMICS CONTINUES TO NOT USE RATING SYSTEM!** Or how about: **FIRST FAILS TO SET PRECEDENT BY MAINTAINING STANDARDS!**

Obviously, that's not going to get us anywhere. Maybe if we snuck it in with some real earth-shattering news — like an announcement that the next issue of Nexus is going to ship three minutes late — it would get front page coverage. But what we really need here is a *gimmick*. Something unpredictable. Something totally unnecessary. Something that will make people buy our books just to find out what all the fuss is about.

And a rating system is just the ticket. Furthermore, I'm convinced that a judiciously worded rating system could, quite possibly, be constructed to appease virtually everyone from Jerry Falwell to Hugh Hefner!

Yes, you can have your comics *and* eat them, too (thereby destroying the evidence). And with that goal in mind (appeasing everyone, not eating comics), I have devised a First Rating System which I intend to propose to our Publisher as soon as I figure out what it means:

Intergalactic: Suitable for all species throughout the known universe. This would apply to virtually everything we currently publish and anything we may contemplate publishing in the near future for two reasons: 1) We are not likely to encounter any extraterrestrial lifeforms in the near future, and 2) If we do, they are not likely to know enough about our culture to even understand, much less be offended by, our books

Intragalactic: Similar to above, but does not guarantee that sentiments from outside the Milky Way will not take

exception to the graphic depiction of humans wearing clothes that will be grossly out of vogue by the time they get here

Interspecies: Nothing here to offend dogs, cats, iguanas, or any other creature on the planet that can neither read nor comprehend two-dimensional objects.

Humanoid: Looks kind of like a human being, but isn't. Since there aren't any of these that we currently know of, this is a dandy catchall category for any of those tricky, borderline cases.



None of the Above: Another shameless marketing ploy. This rating requires that you purchase at least one book containing each of the aforementioned ratings simply to ascertain what it is *not*. Then, of course, you feel compelled to buy the damn thing to find out what it is.

All of the Above: A trick answer when it follows "None of the Above." Don't fall for it!

Danger! Toxic! Fatal if Swallowed: Guaranteed to attract maximum attention. Absolutely irresistible — especially if you hide it under the kitchen sink.

Well, that's it. I think it pretty much covers all the bases — except, of course, the ones with *people* standing on them. We'll let them decide for themselves.

— Rick Oliver

FIRST IN APRIL

American Flagg! #43: Reuben finally reaches the mythical land of California, and hopes to find the peace he seeks. While Mandy wonders why she let him

leave at all, as events in Chicago reach a violent climax. By **J. Marc DeMattels** and **Mark Badger**.

Badger #26: They only come out at night. An army of cockroaches — all under the mysterious power of one man! Badger must crawl through the Chicago sewers to corral the "Roach Wrangler." By **Mike Baron** and **Bill Reinhold**. Plus Clonezone by Baron and **Mark A. Nelson**. Deluxe series.

Dynamo Joe #10: This time the enemy's target is a defenseless farming planet where over a half million civilians are at the mercy of a giant planet-eating Meilenares machine! By **Phil Foglio**, **Ben Dunn** and **Brian Thomas**. Plus *Cargonauts* by Foglio and **Paul Guinan**.

Elric: The Vanishing Tower #1: First welcomes artist **Jan Duursema**, as Elric begins a journey of vengeance. Adapted from the novel by **Michael Moorcock**. Script by **Roy Thomas**. Deluxe, bi-monthly series.

Grimjack #37: John Gaunt's friends gather for a funeral. But there's still a killer out there who must face "The Revenge of John Gaunt." By **John Ostrander** and **Tom Mandrake**. And Munden's Bar by Ostrander and **Robb Phipps**.

Jon Sable, Freelance #50: The First 50th issue. Maggie the Cat returns to the U.S.A. to supplement her income with a dangerous heist — and winds up asking Sable for help. It seems she has the Mob on her tail! By **Mike Grell** and **Robb Phipps**. Deluxe series.

Nexus #35: Refugees come to Nexus' haven on Ylum to escape tyranny. But some bring oppression with them — as the innocent "Newcomer" soon discovers. By **Mike Baron**, **Steve Rude** and **John Nyberg**. And *Tales of Judah* by **Roger Salick** and **Robb Phipps**. Deluxe series.

Shatter #10: Shatter's back in Chicago. Using all his new RNA-enhanced abilities, he's out to have some fun, kick some butt and clean-up the town! By **Peter A. Gillis** and **Charlie Athanas**. Deluxe, bi-monthly series.

Whisper #8: Even the smallest act can have disastrous consequences — as Diane's defense of a Japanese grocer propels Whisper to the center of an escalating gang war. By **Steven Grant** and **Norm Breyfogle**. Bi-monthly series.

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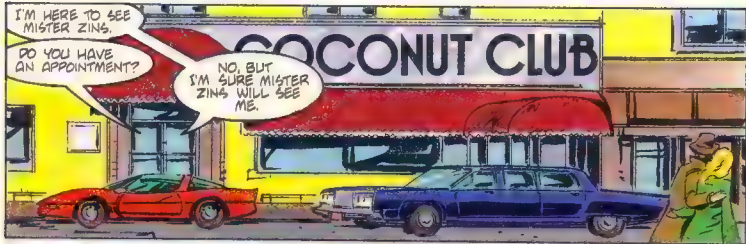
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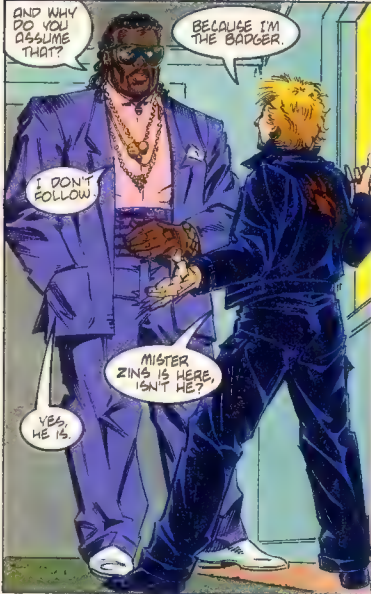


I'M HERE TO SEE MISTER ZINS.

DO YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT?

NO, BUT I'M SURE MISTER ZINS WILL SEE ME.

COCONUT CLUB



AND WHY DO YOU ASSUME THAT?

BECAUSE I'M THE BADGER.

I DON'T FOLLOW.

MISTER ZINS IS HERE, ISN'T HE?

YES, HE IS.



WELL, I'M AN IRRESISTIBLE FORCE. THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.

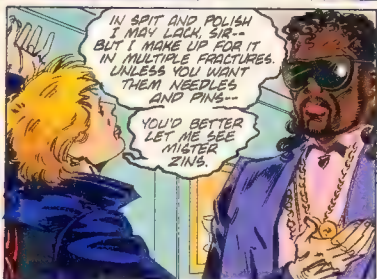


BUT I FIND YOU RESISTABLE.

OH YEAH? WELL, RESIST THIS...

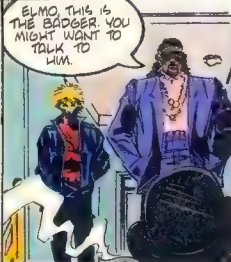


I'M THE BADGER AND THAT'S NO LIE-- I CALL THE BIRDS RIGHT OUT THE SKY. I WALK AROUND ON PINS AND NEEDLES, TALKIN' WITH BUGS AND CONVERSIN' WITH BEETLES.



IN SAIT AND POLISH I MAY LACK, SIR-- BUT I MAKE UP FOR IT IN MULTIPLE FRACTURES. UNLESS YOU WANT THEM NEEDLES AND PINS--

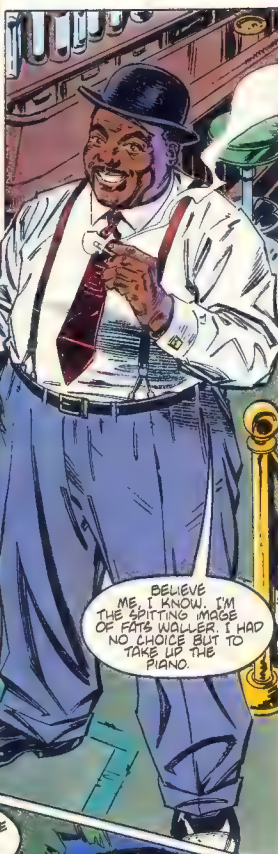
YOU'D BETTER LET ME SEE MISTER ZINS.



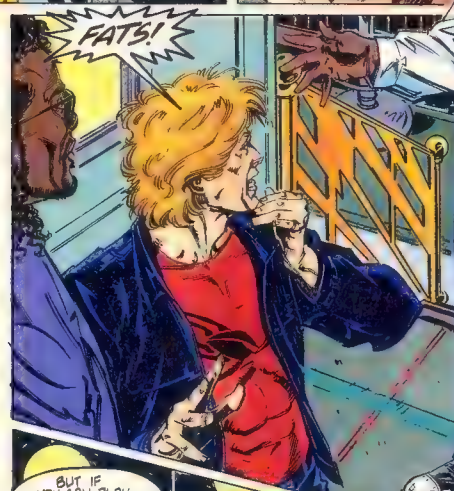
ELMO, THIS IS THE BADGER. YOU MIGHT WANT TO TALK TO HIM.



YOW!



BELIEVE ME, I KNOW. I'M THE SPITTING IMAGE OF FATS WALLER. I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE UP THE PIANO.

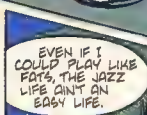


FATS!

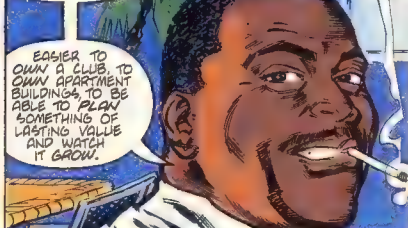


BUT IF YOU CAN PLAY PIANO, WHY PURSUE THIS SLUMLORD BUSINESS?

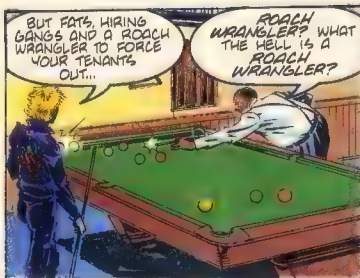
PLEASE, BADGER. I'M A DEVELOPER, NOT A SLUMLORD. LET ME TELL YOU A FEW THINGS...



EVEN IF I COULD PLAY LIKE FATS, THE JAZZ LIFE AIN'T AN EASY LIFE.

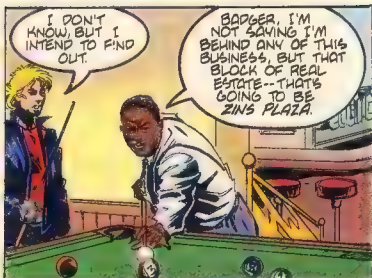


EASIER TO OWN A CLUB, TO OWN APARTMENT BUILDINGS, TO BE ABLE TO PLAY SOMETHING OF LASTING VALUE AND WATCH IT GROW.



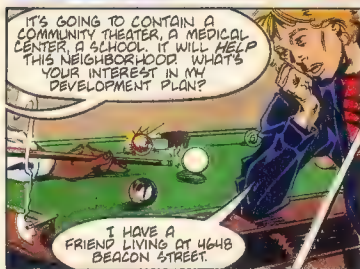
BUT FATS, HIRING GANGS AND A ROACH WRANGLER TO FORCE YOUR TENANTS OUT...

ROACH WRANGLER? WHAT THE HELL IS A ROACH WRANGLER?



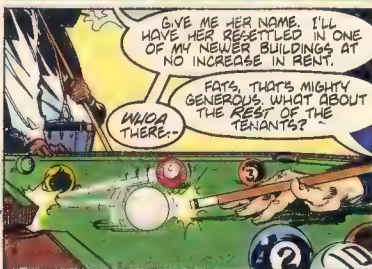
I DON'T KNOW, BUT I INTEND TO FIND OUT.

BADGER, I'M NOT SAYING I'M BEHIND ANY OF THIS BUSINESS, BUT THAT BLOCK OF REAL ESTATE--THAT'S GOING TO BE ZIN'S PLAZA.



IT'S GOING TO CONTAIN A COMMUNITY THEATER, A MEDICAL CENTER, A SCHOOL. IT WILL HELP THIS NEIGHBORHOOD. WHAT'S YOUR INTEREST IN MY DEVELOPMENT PLAN?

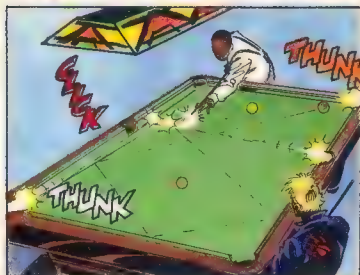
I HAVE A FRIEND LIVING AT 4648 BEACON STREET.



GIVE ME HER NAME. I'LL HAVE HER RESETTLED IN ONE OF MY NEWER BUILDINGS AT NO INCREASE IN RENT.

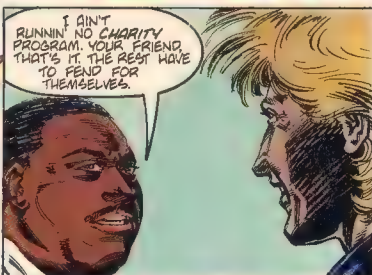
WOWA THERE--

FATS, THAT'S MIGHTY GENEROUS. WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF THE TENANTS?

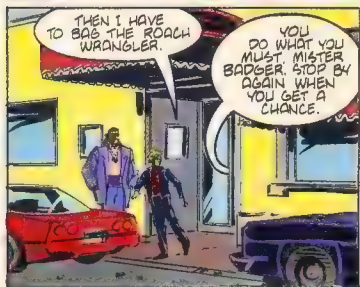


THUNK

THUNK



I AIN'T RUNNIN' NO CHARITY PROGRAM. YOUR FRIEND THAT'S IT. THE REST HAVE TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES.



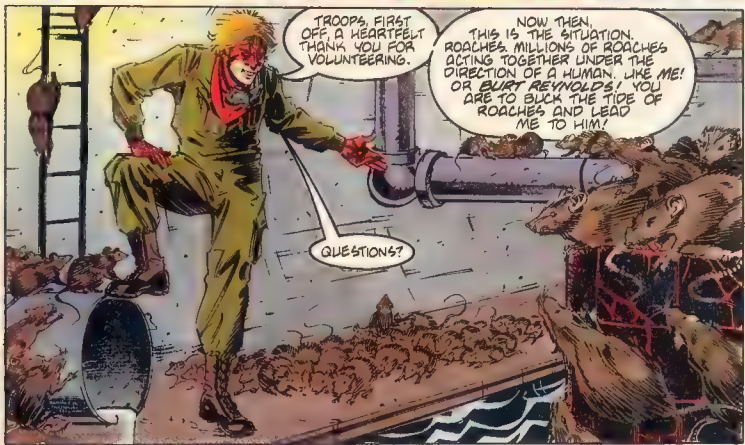
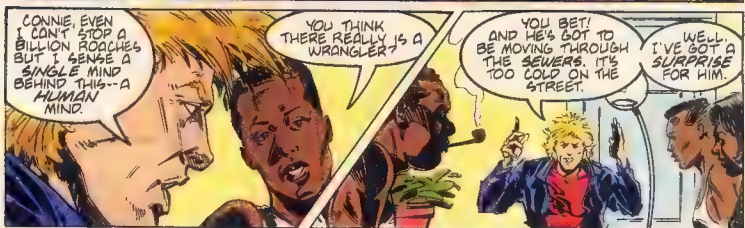
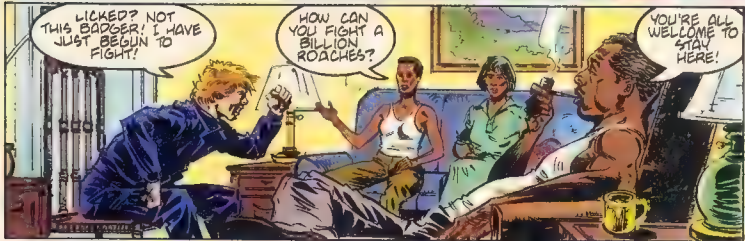
THEN I HAVE TO BAG THE ROACH WRANGLER.

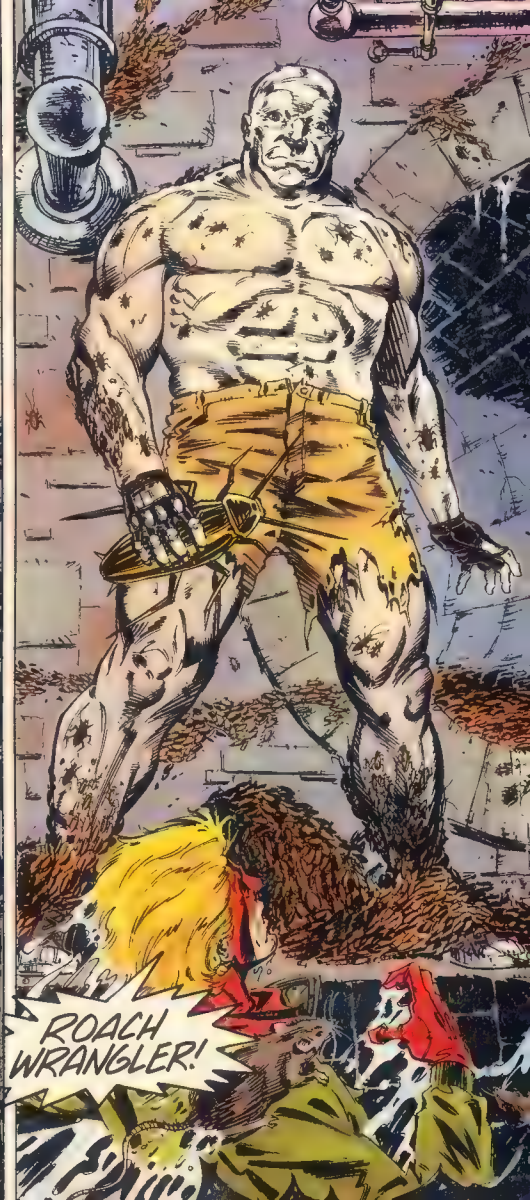
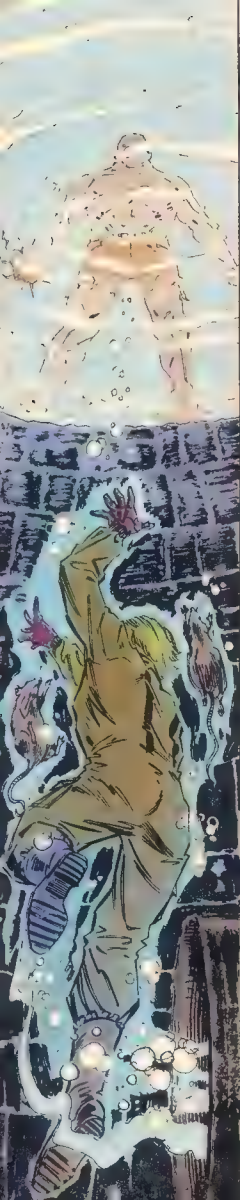
YOU DO WHAT YOU MUST, MISTER BADGER. STOP BY AGAIN WHEN YOU GET A CHANCE.



IF YOU GET A CHANCE.

CONNIE, LORRAINE
AND THE KIDS ARE
STAYING WITH THEIR
UNCLE JAVCEE.





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DAVE DORMAN

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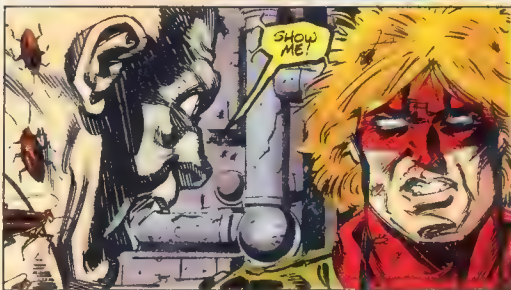
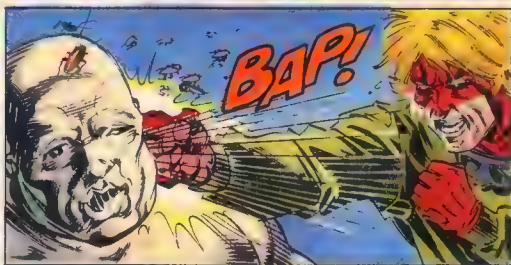
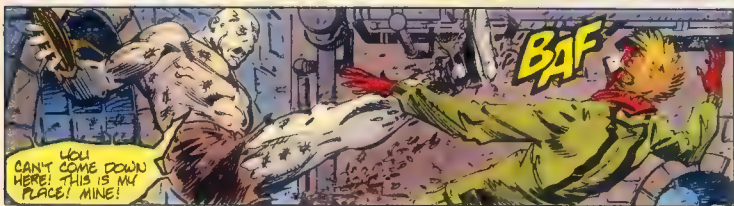
State _____ Zip _____

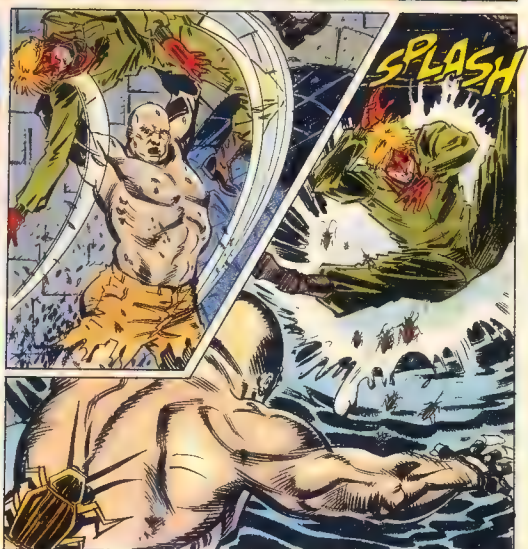
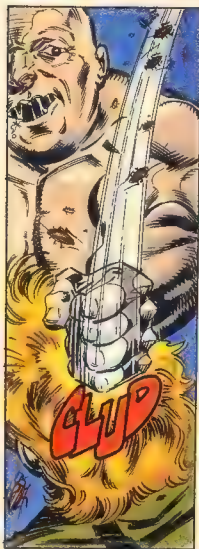
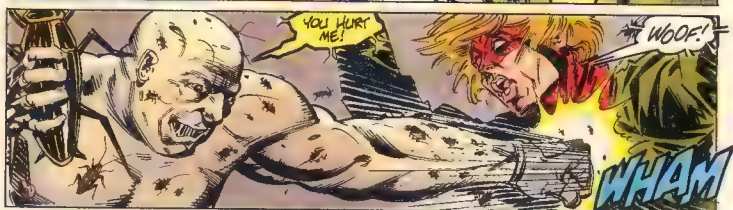
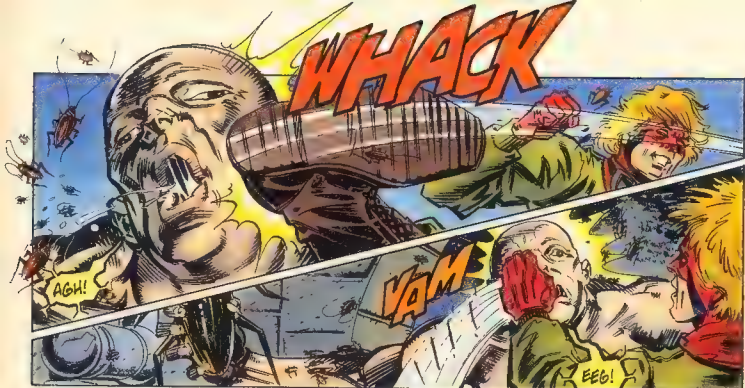
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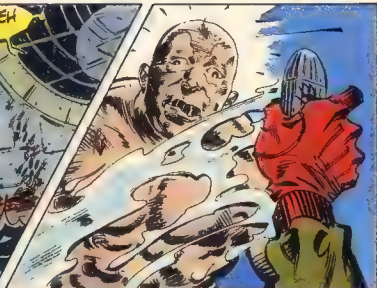
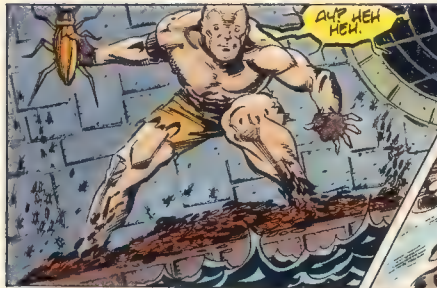
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4 LONELY ASTEROID IN THE BELT.

CHEE!
CHEE!

TOO TALL,
THIS IS YOUR
WORST IDEA
EVER.

A PET SALON IN THE BELT

COULDN'T MISS YOU SAID!

TALES from the CLONEZONE

BUT ZONE!
THIS IS YOUR IDEA!
REMEMBER? THAT FAT
COUNTESS WAS WHINING
ABOUT WHAT TO DO WITH
LITTLE FOO-FOO, AND
YOU OFFERED TO TAKE
CARE OF IT FOR
\$1,000 A CYCLE.

ZONE'S SALON
 CLIPPINGS
 SHAMPOOS
 EAR CHECKS
 DYES
 BEARD
 EARRON
 NELSON
 SCHUBERT
 DE-BUGGING
 OLIVER

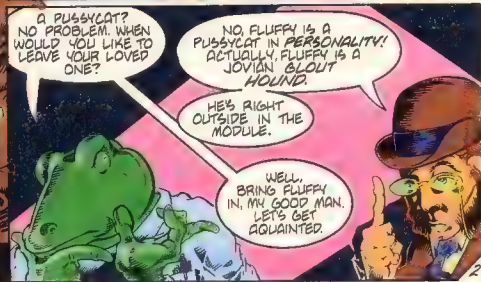
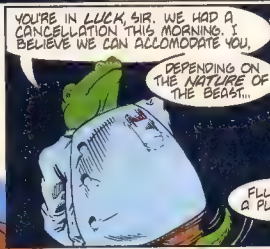
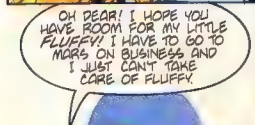
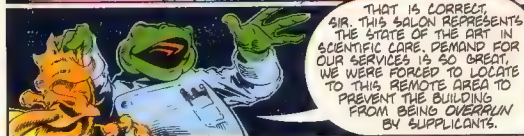
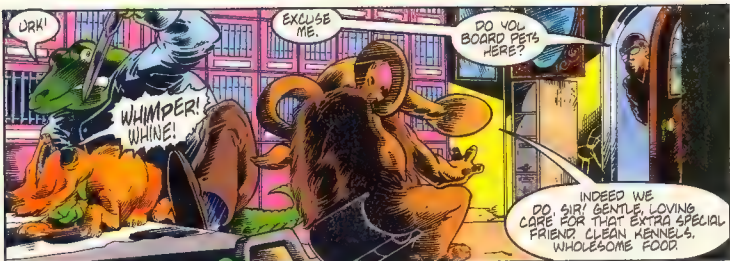
I'VE HAD A BELLY FULL
OF LITTLE FOO-FOO! I'M READY
TO CHOP LITTLE FOO-FOO UP INTO
BITE-SIZED CHUNKS, AND PUT
HIM IN THE WOK!

DON'T DO
IT ZONE! THEY'LL
HANG US!

THERE'S NOT
ENOUGH GRAVITY
TO HANG US! I CAN'T
STAND IT ANYMORE!
WE CAN'T EVEN PAY
THE UTILITIES! WE'LL
PROBABLY FREEZE
TO DEATH!

DING
DING

WAIT, ZONE!
A CUSTOMER!





TOO TALL, WE'VE GOT A REAL MARK HERE. WHAT WITH THE SPECIAL DIET AND GROOMING, FLUFFY COULD BE OUR TICKET OFF THIS TANK.

I SURE HOPE SO, ZONE. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH MORE OF THIS I CAN TAKE.



GROLF!



IX-NAV! IX-NAV! THAT'S A CLASS B MONSTER!

GROLF!

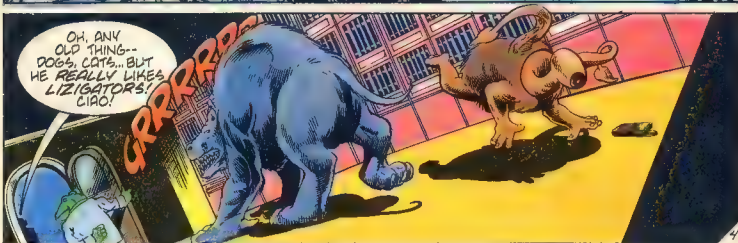
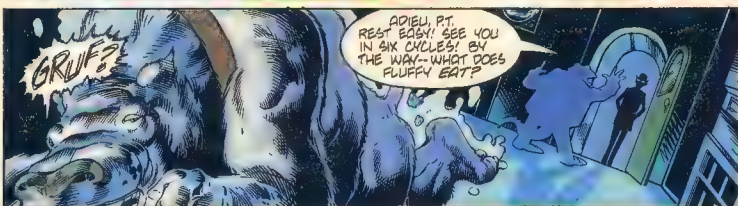
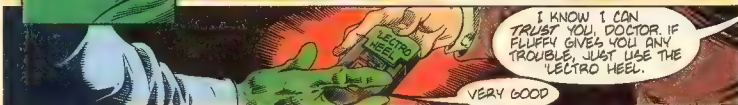
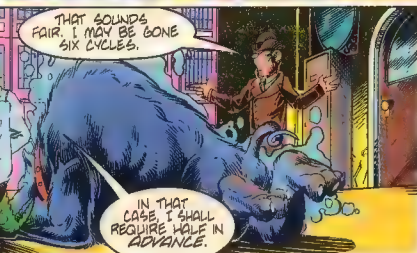
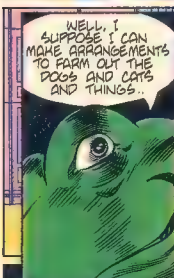
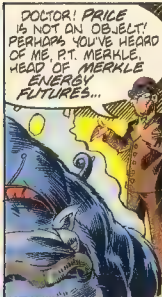
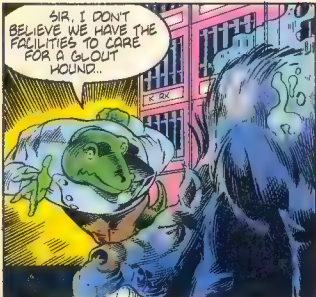


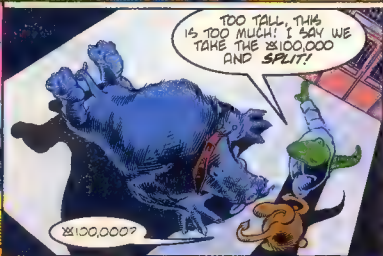
DOWN, FLUFFY! BAD, FLUFFY! OH DEAR, HE'S USUALLY SO WELL BEHAVED! I'LL HAVE TO USE THE 'LECTRO HEEL'!



TAP TAP

WHUU





Dear LARRY,:

C/O FIRST COMICS
435 N. LASALLE
CHICAGO IL
60610

A couple months back, I ran a selection of what I referred to as "bizarre" letters, and challenged readers to send more of the same. I was subsequently deluged with roughly three times as many letters as usual; so I guess the trick worked. However, about two-thirds of them were too bizarre to decipher, let alone print; so I guess it was a wash. Next time, let's try for creative and intelligible bizarre letters, okay?

Dear Larry:

Bizarre? You say my letter was bizarre? Hmmpf! I'll show you. See if I ever buy a First comic again. (Actually, there'd be no point in buying it again. I'm not about to pay twice for the same comic. I bought it once, so I own it already. Of course, I *could* buy a second copy if the original is lost, stolen, or destroyed; but since that shows a flaw in my argument, I'll ignore it. Oh, I'm so depressed.)

David Alan Wright
404 Park St.
3rd Flr. Rear
New Britain, CT 06051

Dear Sirs:

On page 11 of Badger #23, Badg pulls out a pistol (a Walther P-38 from the look of it) and shoots Bob the demon four times. However, although four shots are fired, there are five bullets emerging from the back of Bob's coat! As a result, I have purchased my last issue of First Comics.

Kelley Benham
31552 West St.
So. Laguna, CA 92677

Dear Sirs:

As I was reading your blurb on IBOB I suddenly had an interesting thought. IBOB gets a lot of power from making animals extinct, right? Wouldn't it be interesting if it should turn out that the head of WHO (World Health Organization) were a member of IBOB? Think about it. In this position he would be able to sacrifice the last samples of smallpox, making it extinct. What a coup for IBOB! I shudder to think what might happen when they are able to extinguish another couple of diseases. It could be dangerous to Badger's health.

Geoffrey Tolle
1911 Fairview Pl.
Alliance, OH 44601

Dear Mike:

Gee, ain't this just your year. Seems like you are all over the industry. Congratulations!

Well, anyways, I want to ask you what we as responsible citizens can do about the disgusting spread of The Wheel of Fortune. It's nuts. One turns on the television and that damn Vanna White is slinging her hooters across the screen into everyone's face. Now, I ain't got nothing against hooter slingin' and all that fun, but damnit, the dang thangs are on every dang station.

By the by, I have noticed that certain factions, not content with the Zone's removal from Nexus, are now campaigning for his removal from the hallowed halls of Badger. Waayyil doggies, I'm here to tell you now, each and every mother's son that said continuance of snot-nosed whin-

ing will result in a visit from the ol' privateer and I will deal out a bit of the Old Testament doom and plagues (we are talking a lifetime of eating institutional gravy as an example of someone's fate). Leave Clonezone alone or face frogs up to your keeeester!

James Smith
P.O. Box 1644
Wise, VA 24293

Yes, the Zone does, indeed, have an elite group of erudite followers, as our next letter so clearly illustrates...

Mike Baron:

I read in Amazing Heroes Preview Special #4 that you defended Clonezone from his critics by saying that Clonezone has lots of fans, but they are "too busy and too intelligent to waste their time writing to comics companies."

I am a fan of Clonezone, and I very much resent the implication that I am intelligent. Please stand advised, Mike Baron, that I have instructed my legal representative to research the possibilities of bringing suit against you for libel and reckless scalawaggery.

You haven't heard the last of me.

And as for the reason I haven't written before in support of Clonezone, it is not that I'm too busy; it's just that I only learned to write last week.

Hollis P. Whitehorn II
621 Lincoln Way #3
San Francisco, CA 94122



"Bob" is a trademark, registered with the U.S. government.

Ivan Stang
President
The SubGenius Foundation
P.O. Box 140306
Dallas, TX 75214

I have done the former by printing your letter; but I suggest you do the latter, since absolutely none of the swell stuff that you sent with the "Bob" image plastered all over it has a single trademark or copyright notice. The folks at Simon and Schuster might give you a few tips on how to protect your mark.

It was certainly never our intent to "rip-off" anyone. A lot of famous characters get parodied in the media. Sometimes real life is a lot funnier than anything you could ever make up.

Dear Larry:

Hey, what can I say? This is a great book. Let's talk about some of the talent on it. Mike Baron's writing is superb! I look forward to reading Badger more than any other comic! Along with his superior writing is Bill Reinhold's terrific art! Linda Lessmann's coloring is superlative, and ol' Willy Schubert's lettering really seems to flow with the book.

I loved #21, 22 was kind of lame, but 23 was great! I hope Yeti's okay!

Comic shop didn't have new Badger, shot them.

David Kinnie
1523 Amherst St.
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Seems reasonable to me, Dave. Just as long as you don't over-react to the situation — like break his arms and legs, and then shoot him.

Dear Mike, Chuck, and Rick:

I read Badger all the time but never had a reason to write until I read "Bob" in issue #23. I noticed the character looked remarkably like the "Bob" who appears regularly as an illustration in literature published by the Church of the Sub-Genius. Does this make you sub-genui or geniuses or however you pluralize it?

T.E. Pouncey
Wichita, KS 67208.

No, it doesn't. He also looks a bit like Fred MacMurray, and not

unlike B.K. Taylor's George Appleton. But as the indicia says, "no actual persons, living or dead, without satiric content, are intended or should be inferred." Nevertheless, in a vain effort to mollify a small faction of fanatics (kind of like el presidente giving laser-guided smart bombs to mentally unstable terrorists and kidnappers), I have consented to print the the following letter:

Dear Mr. Obadiah:

Say, uh...

Gee, we're honored and all that you like the "Bob" Dobbs character enough to use him in that Badger story (and it's a very funny story), but don't you think you might at the very least have sent us a copy, or even let us know about it? We're suddenly getting ripped off right and left; everybody from yokel newspaper columnists to rock stars are playing with the character, and we're getting tired of our hard work doing everyone else so much good... and saving them some work. At this point I think it would be only fair for you to run us a free plug — tell your readers to send a buck to our address to know the TRUTH about "Bob" or something. We can sure use the orders. And/or mention that *The Book of the Subgenius* is about to be reprinted by Simon and Schuster, available at bookstores in May.

Or should I send a copy to Simon and Schuster and ask them what to do? They co-own the character too, now. Indeed,



NEXT MONTH: The conclusion to "Roach Wrangler," by **Mike Baron** and **Bill Reinhold**. Can Badger defeat a zillion roaches? Will Harold Washington take credit for the amazing roach exodus from Chicago? Will I get a letter from the mayor's office asking for campaign contributions in return for using his name in this column? Will potentially intelligent people stop taking their own jokes so seriously? I doubt it; but that doesn't mean we'll stop making fun of them! Remember: it's **ONLY A COMIC BOOK!**

— Rick Oliver

**HE THOUGHT IT WAS ALL IN HIS MIND
...UNTIL IT ESCAPED!**



— ROAD TRIPPER —
— ALAN KALD —

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